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The State of the Thoreau Society, 1994 and Beyond

Joel Myerson

[Editor's Note: Myerson delivered the following paper as his presidential address at the 1994 Annual Meeting of the Thoreau Society, which was held at the Meeting House of the First Parish in Concord.]

Like any good New Englander standing in the pulpit of a church, I want to begin by quoting scripture; in this case, from the by-laws that we just passed: "The purpose of the Society shall be ... to honor Henry David Thoreau; to foster education about and stimulate interest in his life, works, and philosophy; to coordinate research in his life and writings; and to act as a repository for Thoreauiana and articles of memorabilia relevant to Henry David Thoreau and his times" (TSB, no. 206, p. 1).

In 1941, when the Society was established, it was easy to carry out these goals. The dues were a dollar a year, and the tasks were to stay in touch with your fellow Thoreauvians through the bulletin and to come to the annual meeting in Concord if you could. The challenge was simple: to make Thoreau and his ideals available to a growing and receptive audience. It was, particularly after the war, an uncomplicated and optimistic era.

By 1983, the Society was still relatively uncomplicated and optimistic. Its annual budget was less than today's teenager spends on Nintendo. The audience was still receptive. Recognizing that a physical place in Concord would help achieve the Society's goals, the Society merged with the Thoreau Foundation, whose principal asset was the Thoreau Lyceum on Belknap Street here in Concord. In presenting the merger resolution to the membership for voting, the chair of the merger committee, the late Reverend Dana Greeley, remarked, "A few people have feared any change at all. Some have wisely recalled that change is not always improvement. We hope and believe that in this case it will represent improvement. Some people were worried about a greater local domination of the society in event of merger. There have been criticisms even in the past that ad hoc Concord groups have exercised excessive influence. Other people have wondered if 'outlanders' would not try in the future to run the Lyceum. We want the new Thoreau Society to be both local and universal" (TSB, no. 164, p. 1). The motion passed 515 to 11, and a new Thoreau Society was thereby voted into existence.

Although the goals of the new Society were identical to those of the old Society, and while its optimism matched that of earlier years, the days of things being uncomplicated were soon a memory. In 1982, the year before the merger, the total expenses of the Society were \$5,712; last year, in 1993, they were \$62,225. To put it another way, last year the Society spent \$22,714 more than it spent in the entire decade prior to the merger. Also changed was the bottom line: between 1973 and 1982, the

Society had a net profit of a tidy \$108; between 1985 and 1993, and not including the substantial losses during the Jubilee year, the Society lost \$10,868. (There are no financial figures for 1983 and 1984, before Eric Parkman Smith became treasurer, but the need in 1984 to raise membership fees and to begin annual fund-raising appeals suggests that we ran deficits during those two years as well.) But even that latter figure, \$10,868, is misleading because it does not reflect unrecorded gifts made by certain members to pay for emergencies, such as fixing the roof of the Lyceum. I cite these figures not to numb you into sleepiness, but rather, my Thoreauvian neighbors, to wake you up! Like it or not, since the merger in 1983 we have had the formal structure and numbers of a business. And the sad, brutal facts are that our expenses regularly exceed our income and that our appeals for donations meet with less and less success each year. In short, were we to continue business as usual, we would eventually become financially insolvent.

Just as we have been financially challenged during the past decade, we discovered ourselves physically challenged as well, when it appeared that an office development and a housing development threatened to erode further the integrity of the Walden Woods ecosystem. Many of us remember those first CNN interviews with long-time Society members and officers of the Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance, Tom Blanding and Ed Schofield, both of whom, Paul Revere-like, sounded the alarm, "The developers are coming! The developers are coming!" One of the many people who responded to these warning cries was the musician and environmentalist, Don Henley. He established the Walden Woods Project, put Kathi Anderson in charge of the Project, and the rest, as they say, is history—and damn fine history it is. Through the noble efforts of Tom, Ed, Henley, Kathi, and thousands of others around the world, important portions of the Walden woods have been saved from development and preserved forever as open space.

But all this activity has led to a spiritual crisis of sorts for the Society. In the past few years, Henley, Kathi, and the Walden Woods Project have introduced hundreds of thousands more people to Henry—his writings and his ideals—and to the concept of Walden Woods than has the Thoreau Society. For example, when I teach *Walden* today, my undergraduates come to the book expecting the best; after all, Don Henley has endorsed it, and they trust his judgment much more than they do mine. I know that those of you who teach Thoreau have had the same experience. Some people seem to be upset by this. I'm not. To the contrary, I am delighted that interest in Henry is at its highest since the heady days of the 1960s, and I am grateful to Henley and the Walden Woods Project for this dramatic increase of interest. So should we all be. What concerns me now is that the Society, as presently constituted and oriented, is not in a position to take advantage of this new and exciting interest in Henry's life and ideals by a new generation. We are too poor. We are too disorganized. We are too timid. The same concerns about change that Dana Greeley raised a decade ago apply

now with renewed force. What do we do? What will the Society be in 1994 and beyond?

As I view matters—and I reflect the opinion of the new Board of Directors, with whom I have consulted—we should have three means to enact the Society's purpose as stated in its by-laws: (1) an educational program, (2) a relationship with the Walden Pond State Reservation, and (3) a historic place associated with Thoreau. Our current educational program is excellent so far as it goes. Anne McGrath continues to be a superlative exponent of Henry to local second graders and to students from schools from around the region, as well as to visitors from around the world. We must continue these educational programs, and we must have Anne administer them. We ought also to expand them if we can. We need to work more closely with the people at the Walden Pond State Reservation so that in the future we can have an active presence there in the interpretation of Thoreau and Walden, both the book and the pond. We almost had—thanks to the generosity of the Walden Woods Project—the yellow Thoreau-Alcott house on Main Street here in Concord for the Society's use as a Lyceum. During months of tantalizing, often maddening negotiations, we seemingly owned—and then, I regret to say, we lost the opportunity to own—this historically important property, the most significant Thoreau-related structure in existence. We will continue, with the help of the Walden Woods Project, to look for a property in central Concord. And if the gods smile, that property may well be the Thoreau-Alcott house.

We are, as you can see, at a crossroads. We can continue hobbling along and do what we have done in the same way that we have done it for pretty much the same group of people that we have done it for, or we can attempt to be extra-vagant in Thoreau's sense of the term—to act, in other words, *without bounds*. Your new Board of Directors thinks that we should take the latter approach.

A major problem in going forward is that we are inadequately prepared for participating effectively in today's world. Our bookkeeping system has always met our simple needs; it does not meet the needs of federal and private grant auditors. Therefore, we ourselves cannot apply for grants to sponsor summer seminars on Thoreau in Concord, such as Walter Harding used to do under the auspices of SUNY-Geneseo. We cannot apply for collection development or cataloguing grants because the Belknap Street property does not meet minimum climate-control and security requirements. Likewise, we cannot approach a number of collectors who wish to make large donations to the Society of books, manuscripts, artifacts, and memorabilia because these collectors too have quite naturally insisted on a climate-controlled and secure repository for their invaluable materials. Moreover, we do not have the space to accommodate these collections. But even if we did have a location that was secure, climatically controlled, and spacious, who would do all the necessary work? Certainly not your president or secretary, both of whom already have at least one full-time job each.

But I am pleased to report that the solution to all these problems seems now at hand.

The Walden Woods Project made clear early on that its goal of raising monies to buy land in and around Concord would not be an open-ended one. Its parent organization, the Isis Foundation, would need future monies to conduct its environmental activities at other locations around the country. But the Walden Woods Project wants to leave in place not just the physical properties around Walden Pond, but an intellectual or educational heritage as well. Toward that end, it has challenged the Thoreau Society to attain new heights, to build our castles in the air, where they should be, and to work together to build solid, enduring

foundations under those castles. That is where we stand today: challenged to set our sights higher and to begin the work of making our vision a reality.

This afternoon the other officers of the Society will join me at the Concord Academy to discuss with you how we plan to make our vision for the future of the Society real. For the remainder of my talk this morning let me tell you about our vision.

As many of you know, in six days the Walden Woods Project will sign the closing agreement on the purchase of an extremely valuable property in Lincoln. That property—appropriately named "Baker Farm," even if it is not Henry's place of that name—consists of 25 acres and is just on the other side of Pine Hill from Walden Pond. (If you stand on Route 126 where it passes the pond and faced away from the pond, you would be looking toward Pine Hill. The Baker Farm property is just over that hill.) On the property is a large, very lovely three-story Tudor-style house. The land will of course be held as open space, but the Walden Woods Project has offered the house to the Thoreau Society for use as a Thoreau Educational Center. Let me show you what the Thoreau Educational Center looks like. [Here Myerson unveiled a large color photograph of the Center.] The Society's principal offices will be here, as will the Society's new Executive Director. Our current research library will be moved to this Center and will be supplemented to include, eventually, all works by, about, and relating to Thoreau. We hope eventually to house the enormous collection of the Thoreau Textual Center, which is now in the library at the University of California at Santa Barbara. The Center will feature a large reading room, an archival storage area, guest facilities for overnight visitors, meeting rooms, and a state-of-the-art Thoreau database that will be accessible to anyone in the world by computer dial-in. At the Center the Society will host seminars sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Science Foundation, and similar organizations. Our educational programs will be planned and coordinated from the Center. As we can afford to do so, we plan to expand those programs to outlying areas and eventually, through curriculum-development programs funded by private and corporate sponsors, to the entire nation, if not the entire world. We plan to capitalize on the growing interest and enthusiasm of Thoreau as a scientist and pioneering ecologist by encouraging contemporary scientists to use the Center as a base of operations for the study of the Walden Woods ecosystem, including Walden Pond, and also for the study of how to conserve such ecosystems in semi-urban environments.

The Center will be open to any member of the public who demonstrates a serious interest in Thoreau. For those whose interest in Thoreau is genuine but not quite so serious as to require research facilities, we will have the Thoreau Lyceum, which will not be the Belknap Street property, but which will be centrally located in Concord. As I mentioned, we have hopes of eventually acquiring the Thoreau-Alcott house on Main Street for that purpose; in the meantime we will arrange to carry out the activities of the Lyceum at another location. During the coming months and years we also plan to work very closely with officials at the Walden Pond State Reservation and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. Our goal will be the establishment of a viable visitor's center near the Pond, where one or more Society representatives would help visitors interpret Thoreau and his environment. And, of course, we will continue regular publication of *The Thoreau Society Bulletin* and *The Concord Saunterer*, and we will continue to improve those periodicals as our finances allow.

The major components of our vision, then, are the Thoreau Educational Center, a Thoreau Lyceum in Concord, and a Visitor's Center at Walden Pond. With these we will be prepared to advance confidently into the twenty-first century; with these we will most effectively fulfill the four-fold mission outlined in our by-laws. That mission, again, is "to honor Henry David Thoreau; to foster education about and stimulate interest in his life, works, and philosophy; to coordinate research in his life and writings; and to act as a repository for Thoreauiana and articles of memorabilia relevant to Henry David Thoreau and his times."

Are we being visionary? Of course. We are, after all, Thoreauvians. Are we being practical? Again, yes—we are Thoreauvians. In fact, the basic foundation for our vision will be in place next year, in time to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Henry's own move to new surroundings, a half-mile from our own new situation on the other side of Pine Hill. Just as Henry recognized that a book called *Walden* would easily reach more people than could all his lectures combined, so will the new Thoreau Society reach out to more people and accomplish greater goals than did the old. There is indeed more day to dawn, and our future, like the sun, is but a morning star.

Drop Dead, Henry Thoreau: An Imagined Rejection Slip

Garrison Keillor

[Editor's Note: The letter below appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, 1 May 1994, p. 3, as the lead "rejection slip" in an article titled "Drop Dead, Carroll Lewis: History's Rejection Slips." The article was headed with the following explanatory note: "Writers (alive, dead and imaginary) were the entertainment at the Authors Guild Foundation benefit this spring, as five novelists and playwrights read rejection slips their distinguished predecessors or make-believe contemporaries might have received. Here are excerpts."]

Dear Henry:

I tried to write to you out at the pond but the letter came back marked "No Such Address." Did you sublet? Anyway, I hope this reaches you at your mom's house.

First of all, everyone here at Fuller & Wheeler was pleased that you gave us first crack at "Walden," and I must say, as the one who first suggested that you ought to live in the woods, I was personally gratified. I plunged into the book immediately, and, Henry, I must say that, even with all its faults, it's your best work ever and I'm happy for you.

Unfortunately, my colleagues don't see it that way. When I told them it was about the woods, they started thinking "Deerslayer" and Natty Bumppo and they kept asking, "Where's the Indians?" And they were a little put off by the way the book keeps jumping around. And I think they have a point. The first 20 pages are slow going, you have to admit, with all the drowsy stuff about the evils of materialism, a subject that God knows has been covered elsewhere, and then bang, for no reason you shift gears and suddenly you've got the ax in your hand and you're building the damn cabin, and that's great, and you give prices on nails and boards and everything, but just when the reader might like to see a floor plan and maybe some advice about preventing dry rot, suddenly we're hearing about gardening and beans and then it's woodchucks and

then reincarnation, and the reader quietly closes the book and shoves it back in the shelf and goes back to Dickens.

"The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," O.K., maybe so, but most men are never going to read that line because they got quietly desperate a hundred pages earlier reading about man's natural goodness.

What this book needs is structure, and what I'm thinking, Henry, is *calendar*. One page per month, one aphorism per day, one of your quickies, like "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in" or "Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes"—both great. Or: "Our life is frittered away by detail... Simplify. Simplify." That's all we're asking you to do, really, is simplify your book and make it a calendar. People get some inspiration, they get a space to write in doctor appointments and birthdays, they get some nice etchings of trees and leaves, and along the way they start to wonder: "Where can I read more of this Thoreau? He's pretty good." And then we bring out your next book, which I hope is going to be a less about the universe and more about you. And a chapter about Ralph Waldo Emerson, personal anecdotes, the Emerson nobody knows—that wouldn't hurt either. As you yourself say, "Only that day dawns to which we are awake." In other words, if nobody buys your book, pal, then what's the point?

Think about it. Let's aim for an 1855 calendar. That would give us plenty of time to line up advertising. Would you have any objection to Colt's revolvers? Let me know. Meanwhile, I remain,

Your faithful friend,
Edw. Wheeler
Senior Editor

Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

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Dissertation Abstracts International [DAI], 10 (April 1993): 3528A. Northern Illinois University.

Frost, Linda. "The Red Face of Man," the Penobscot Indian, and a Conflict of Interest in Thoreau's *Maine Woods*." *ESQ*, 39 (1993): 21-47. A very interesting analysis of Thoreau's varying attitudes toward the Indians he meets on his *Maine Woods* journeys.

Gaines, Charles. *A Family Place: A Man Returns to the Center of His Life*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994. 195pp. When author Charles Gaines found his marriage breaking up after writing a highly successful book and making a movie thereof, he read Thoreau's *Walden* and decided it was time to get back to fundamentals and the simple life. He and his wife and children patched things up, traveled up to Nova Scotia, bought land on the sparsely settled sea coast there, and together built a simple cabin as a summer cottage. (By the way, their simple life included a 21-foot boat, a kayak, a windsurfer, a small sailboat, a raft, mountain bikes, water skis, a giant kite, and snorkeling gear.) But they found working together so much fun that they eventually converted the cottage over to a year-round house and have settled down to a much happier life, thanks in good part to Thoreau. A lively and readable little autobiography.

Greenfield, B.R. "Poe & Thoreau." In *Narrating Discovery: The Romantic Explorer in American Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1992. Pp. 165-201.

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Harwell, Albert Brantley, Jr. "Writing the Wilderness: A Study of Henry Thoreau, John Muir, and Mary Austin." *DAI*, 53 (January 1993): 2378A. University of Tennessee.

Hildebidle, John. "Thoreau at the Edge." *Prose Studies*, 15 (December 1992): 344-65.

Howley, Kathleen. "Where's the Rum." *Boston Globe*, 8 May 1994. Details about the house Thoreau lived in at Canton, Massachusetts, with Orestes Brownson when he taught school there.

Iida, Ichiro. "Thoreau and the Indian—the Wildness and Civilization." *Studies in Henry Thoreau (SIIT)*, 20 (December 1993): 27-36. Note the new name of the Thoreau Society of Japan's bulletin.

Ito, Shoko. "The Dispersion of Seeds' and Historical Sense of H.D. Thoreau." In *Studies in English and English Literature in Memory of the Retirement of Prof. Michio Kawai*. Tokyo: Eichosha, 1993. Pp. 3-20.

Iwao, Sumie. "A Short Study on the Style of Thoreau's *Walden*." *SIIT*, 20 (December 1993): 60-69.

Kameda, Mieko. "Humanization of Nature." *SIIT*, 20 (December 1993): 20-26.

Kikama, Yasuo. "Readings of *Walden*." *SIIT*, 20 (December 1993): 48-59.

Kamioka, Katsumi. *Walden: Thoreau's Search for the Whole Man*. Review. *SIIT*, December 1993.

Keillor, Garrison. "Drop Dead, Lewis Carroll: History's Rejection Slips." *New York Times Book Review*. 1 May 1994. Reprinted above.

LaTores, Linda. "Whose Vision Is It for Thoreau Center?" *Concord Journal*, 12 May 1994. Letter to Editor.

Miller, Douglas T. "Henry David Thoreau." *Facts on File*. 1991. Pp. 106-8.

Milner, Philip. "Some Private Business." In *The Yankee Professor's Guide to Life in Nova Scotia*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Lancelot Press, 1993. Pp. 103-26. This is the second book we've received within a week in which an American moves to Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and settles down to living a simple life inspired by Thoreau.

The book has many references to Thoreau, including a long section on taking some of his high-school students to visit Walden Pond—which did not excite them. A modified version of this chapter will appear in the *Concord Saunterer*.

Monadnock Ledger (Peterborough, N.H.). "\$100 from Everlasting Fame," 24 February 1994. Musings on what might have happened with Thoreau if Ellen Sewall's father had not refused a pastorate in Dublin, New Hampshire, rather than move to Scituate, Massachusetts.

Montague, William. *Little Mouse*. Review. *Forthcoming Books*, April 1994.

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Saito, Hikaru, et al. "Tributes to Prof. Masayoshi Higashiyama, 1908-93." *SIIT*, 20 (December 1993): 3-19. Tributes to the pioneer Japanese Thoreau scholar.

Salt, Henry S. *Life of Henry David Thoreau*. Edited by George Hendrick, Willene Hendrick, and Fritz Oehlschlaeger. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993. 153pp. \$29.95. Salt was an English reformer who delighted in calling himself a "compendium of cranks." In 1890 he brought out a biography of Thoreau. In 1896 he brought out an updated but shortened version. Neither edition sold well, even though most Thoreauvians thought it the best biography of Thoreau yet written. In 1908, after the publication of the complete *Journal*, he wrote a third version, but never succeeded in getting it published. About 1930, when Raymond Adams announced he was starting upon a biography, Salt sent the 1908 manuscript to help him. But Adams never published his biography, and after his death Salt's manuscript was found among his papers. At that point the Hendricks and Oehlschlaeger took over the manuscript, edited and updated it carefully, and now have published it. The result is a beautifully written and very sympathetic short biography of Thoreau that all Thoreauvians should treasure, even though it was not published for eighty-five years after it was written and fifty-four years after its author died. Salt was just the person to write about Thoreau. He was in complete sympathy with Thoreau's ideas, and he wrote about them and him beautifully. If someone wants a good brief introduction to Thoreau and his works, this is the book to read.

—. The Same. Review. *London Times*, 27 December 1993.

Schneider, Richard. *Henry David Thoreau*. Review. *SIIT*, December 1993.

Sherwood, Mary P. *Emerson's Walden*. Concord: Walden Forever Wild, [1994]. 19pp. A useful little pamphlet on Emerson's relationship with Walden Pond, but

unfortunately filled with many careless errors, such as spelling Hawthorne's name four different ways.

Staples, Brent. "The End of Solitude." *New York Times*. 14 June 1994. We need to listen to Thoreau rather than our pocket phones and pagers.

Stevens, Lauren. "Local Celebration Planned to Mark 150th Anniversary of Thoreau's Greylock Ascent." *Advocate*. 23 February 1994. Plans for a summer climb.

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We are indebted to the following for information sent in for this bulletin: E. Barker, D. Barto, K. Cameron, D. Datch, J. Dawson, M. Ferguson, R. Galvin, M. Granger, B. Henderson, P. Huber, E. Johnson, D. Kamen-Kaye, K. Kasegawa, B. Kritzberg, L. Matson, L. Phillips, G. Robbins, G. Ryan, M. Sherwood, M. Sperber, H. Siegelaub, R. Thompson, E. Walker, and R. Winslow. Please keep Walter Harding (19 Oak Street, Geneseo, NY 14454) informed of items he has missed and new ones as they appear.

I Discover Thoreau

Bradley P. Dean

When I was introduced to the writings of Thoreau in my senior year of high school, I was not ready to hear what he had to say. At my English teacher's suggestion, I purchased Joseph Wood Krutch's paperback edition of Thoreau's selected writings and tried, half-heartedly, to read *Walden*. But the first chapter, "Economy," I found too tedious, too preachy, too long. I put the Krutch edition aside, visited a local bookstore, and bought the Cliff Notes for the book.

Those Cliff Notes were excellent. With their help I sailed through the required assignment. But they also heightened my curiosity about and appreciation of Thoreau. Over the next year I occasionally got the Krutch edition out to read. I was particularly taken with Thoreau's shorter pieces: "Life without Principle," "Civil Disobedience," "Autumnal Tints," "Wild Apples," and so on. Those I could more easily get my mind around.

But Thoreau nonetheless remained on the periphery of my life until the late spring of 1973. I had enlisted in the U.S. Navy in January, gone through basic training in San Diego and technical training in Port Hueneme, California, been assigned to a mobile construction battalion then on duty at Roosevelt Roads Naval Base in Puerto Rico, and eventually went back to Port Hueneme, the battalion's homeport, to await a ten-month remote-duty assignment to Diego Garcia, a small atoll in the Indian Ocean. While in homeport, I had little to do, so to pass the time I read more of the Krutch edition. After a while, I read because I liked what I was reading. Then I grew to love what I was reading. Shortly thereafter I ran into trouble.

In homeport I was unable to do my regular job (fix heavy-construction equipment) and was instead assigned to "clean-up" details, which consisted of picking up cigarette butts and candy wrappers that my fellow sufferers and I had tossed around the area during our many breaks. One day we were told that an admiral would soon visit the base and that we were to have a command inspection, in anticipation of which we were ordered to get Marine-style haircuts. As it happened, I had a leave (vacation) coming up so that I could return home to attend my girlfriend's high-school graduation. I did not want to go home with a bald head, and besides, I reasoned, my hair style at the time was consistent with Navy regulations.

What to do? I read Thoreau. "You are paid," he wrote in "Life without Principle," "for being something less than a man"—which was painfully true, for I was paid for picking up trash and following orders that made little sense, something that I did not think men should be expected to do. I decided to disobey the order and not get a haircut, for which offense I was "awarded" a Captain's Mast, a sort of low-court farce in which the accused is given the opportunity to clear his name by pleading his case before his accuser. The proceedings were plainly unjust, so I remanded them to General Court Martial instead and was repaid for my efforts with a month in the brig, a reduction in rank, and a fine of a few hundred dollars.

I admit now that this entire escapade was the result of stubborn youth, and, except for eventually marrying my girlfriend, it was probably the best thing I ever did. Because the Navy-assigned lawyer advised me to get my hair cut and plead guilty, I had to defend myself, which in turn made me think about who I was, what I was doing, and why I was doing it. I relied heavily on Thoreau for guidance and reassurance during that time, reading his works closely every evening, usually into the early-morning hours. After the Court Martial, I continued my study of Thoreau and also took to studying books on military jurisprudence. As a consequence of my recent experiences and studies, my mind seemed to sharpen. While in the brig I discovered that my Court-Martial proceedings were illegal because my accuser also convened the court, so I filed an appeal, which was eventually accepted. I also learned of a loophole in the regulations that eventually enabled me to get an early discharge from the Navy.

Although I had enlisted for four years, I spent only two years, two months, and two days in the Navy—two days longer than Thoreau had spent at Walden Pond. After my discharge and a two-year stint in the hotel business, I took advantage of the G.I. Bill and went to college, and after getting my B.A. I decided to pursue a Master's degree. To pay Thoreau back, I vowed to write my thesis on "Life without Principle" and was able to reconstruct the early lectures of that essay from manuscripts and newspaper reviews. I then went on to get my Ph.D. and for my dissertation reconstructed Thoreau's *The Dispersion of Seeds* manuscript. That book, the last one Thoreau worked on, was published last year under the umbrella

title *Faith in a Seed*. The first volume of *Faith in a Seed* to roll off the press now sits on my bookshelf between custom-crafted leather-bound covers—and beside my first Thoreau book, the Krutch edition, now severely tattered and held together with scotch tape.

Thoreau Society 1994 Annual Meeting

The 1994 annual meeting of the Thoreau Society, Inc., was held in Concord, Massachusetts, from Thursday afternoon, 7 July, to Monday morning, 11 July 1994.

Activities at the Concord Academy

Lodgers who had arrived in Concord early joined with local members on Thursday afternoon at the Concord Academy's Faculty-Student Center for a reception. A lovely buffet dinner was served that evening in the Academy's dining room, and another reception followed the dinner. As several members have since said, the high point of the annual meetings for many are these daily opportunities to sit down to a delicious breakfast or dinner, or mill around at these receptions, and talk with one another.

After the Business Meeting Saturday, there were two sessions at the Academy. One of those sessions, on the

future of the Society, is reported in some detail below. The other, on "Emerson's Women," was sponsored by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society and consisted of moderator Ronald A. Bosco and panelists Phyllis Cole, Helen R. Dcese, and Daniel Shealy.

On Saturday evening, members enjoyed *Mr. Emerson and Thoreau*, a play set in the middle of Emerson's eulogy for Thoreau. Because the weather was pleasant, the play took place at the Concord Academy's Chapel, which was appropriate because Emerson's eulogy took place at the Meeting House of the First Parish in Concord.

The Business Meeting

The annual business meeting took place on Saturday morning, 9 July, at the Meeting House of the First Parish in Concord. Beginning at 9:00 a.m. members enjoyed coffee, donuts, and good conversation in the vestry. At 9:37 a.m. in the Main Hall upstairs, Society president Joel Myerson called the meeting to order and began by summarizing the events scheduled for the remainder of the day and for the next day. He then called Robert Galvin, chair of the By-Laws Review Committee, to the podium to deliver that committee's report. Galvin pointed out that the Board had unanimously approved the proposed by-laws at its 1993 meeting and at its 1994 meeting had approved two changes to the by-laws as printed in the winter bulletin: (1) substituting gender-neutral language throughout and (2) altering the purpose clause (section 1.2) to read "The

purpose of the Society shall be to honor Henry David Thoreau; to foster education about and stimulate interest in his life, works, and philosophy; to coordinate research in his life and writings; and to act as a repository for Thoreauiana and articles of memorabilia relevant to Henry David Thoreau and his times" (italics indicate added words). Galvin then noted that a vote of two-thirds of the members present in person or by proxy was required by the Society's current by-laws to adopt the proposed new by-laws. A movement was made and seconded to accept the by-laws as amended, and the floor was opened for discussion. Someone asked for clarification of the phrase in section 1.2, "to coordinate research," and Myerson answered that the Society provides answers to researchers on Thoreau or puts researchers in touch with experts who can answer questions. Brad Dean also noted that the bulletin helps fulfill that purpose for the Society. No other discussion having been raised, Galvin called for a vote. Eric Parkman Smith called for a test vote to determine if a satisfactory vote could be achieved without having to distribute, gather, and count individual ballots. Those voting in favor of adopting the by-laws as amended were asked to raise their hands, and then those voting against

adoption were asked to raise their hands. Some 150 members were present in person, all of whom appeared to have voted. Eighty-seven proxy ballots had been received, with one of those voting against adoption. Two of the members present in person also voted against adoption. More than two-thirds of

the membership clearly having voted in favor (three against as opposed to some 230 in favor), the motion to adopt the by-laws was carried.

Myerson reminded the members that the Thoreau Lyceum would be open throughout the annual meeting and had a plentiful supply of books and other items for sale. The supply of materials was plentiful in large part thanks to the generosity of Kenneth Walter Cameron and John MacAlear, both of whom had donated literally hundreds of books and articles to the Society. Also to be thanked for the plentiful supply of items available at the Lyceum was Sandra Lower of our Archives Committee, who spent many hours during the past few months going through our archives to find duplicates, which she then placed on sale to members visiting the Lyceum. Proceeds from those items are to be used exclusively for the Society's archives.

One of the most pleasant opportunities offered by the annual meeting, Myerson then pointed out, was that we are able to thank those who made the meeting possible—and, indeed, made the meeting so successful. He began by thanking Malcolm Ferguson and Ron Pesha, the chairs of the Program Committee for the Annual Meeting, for their hard work. Because of renewed interest in the Society, Myerson was pleased this year to be able to thank more people than ever before for their help with the annual meeting: those people were Kathi Anderson, Ken Basile, Thomas Blanding, Helen Bowdoin, Peggy Brace, Diane Clymer, Claibourne Dawes, Joseph Gilbert, Ronald Hoag, Mike Long, Sandra Lower, Marcia Moss, Richard O'Connor,

4-9 July 1995
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Ronna Pesha, Robert Sattelmeyer, Sarah Sattelmeyer, Joseph Smith, and Marian Wheeler. The members present showed their appreciation to these volunteers with a hearty round of applause.

Myerson noted that a faithful member of the congregation was not in his pew and that Walter Harding sent his regards to the Society from his home in Geneseo, New York, where he was recovering from a mild stroke. Myerson had spoken with Harding the day before and reported that he was doing fine and looked forward to attending next year's annual meeting. (This was the first annual meeting that Harding had missed since 1965.)

Myerson introduced several members who gave reports for affiliated organizations: Elizabeth Witherell reported on the activities of the Princeton Edition of *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, Jayne Gordon told the members about the newly formed Concord Program and listed some of the many groups who had come together to investigate some of the historical and contemporary connections between man and nature, and Kathi Anderson spoke about some of the astonishing successes of the Walden Woods Project and the opportunities that have arisen for collaboration between the Project and the Society. Anne McGrath, curator of the Thoreau Lyceum, then spoke about the work that has been conducted during the past year at the Belknap Street location in Concord and about the many letters she and her staff has received from visitors to the Lyceum.

Barbara Wojtusik was then called to the pulpit to deliver the report of the Nominating Committee, which consisted of offering to the membership the following slate: president, Joel Myerson (two-year term); treasurer, Eric Parkman Smith (two-year term); secretary, Bradley P. Dean (two-year term); Board of Directors: Kathi Anderson, Ken Basile, Bradley P. Dean, Robert Galvin, Joseph Gilbert, Jayne Gordon, Ronald W. Hoag, Wesley T. Mott, Joel Myerson, Robert Sattelmeyer, Daniel Shealy, Eric Parkman Smith, Elizabeth Witherell (all three-year terms); Albert Bussewitz, Malcolm Ferguson, Wendell Glick, Walter Harding, John McAleer, Frederick McGill, Anne McGrath, Michael Meyer, Marcia Moss, Mary Sherwood, W. Stephen Thomas, Frederick Wagner, Eugene Walker, Marian Wheeler, Paul Williams, Ann Zwinger, Honorary Board of Directors; Nominating Committee: Lawrence Buell (one-year term), J. Parker Huber (two-year term), Barbara Wojtusik (three-year term). From the floor Eric Parkman Smith nominated for the Honorary Board of Directors Russ Ready and Eleanor Moore, nominations which were readily accepted. Myerson called for a vote on the entire slate except the Nominating Committee, which required a separate vote to determine the terms of each member. The slate passed unanimously. The vote on the Nominating Committee was then conducted with the results reflected in the terms above.

Eric Parkman Smith was called to the pulpit to deliver the treasurer's report. After distributing two flyers comparing the results of our 1993 and 1994 fiscal years and showing our 1994 actual and 1995 projected budgets, Smith noted that last year we enjoyed a net profit of \$1,992, whereas this year we enjoyed a record profit of \$9,553. The principal reasons for the substantial increase in net profit were that sales from our gift shops at the Lyceum and at the Walden Pond State Reservation increased substantially, we experienced a voluntary staff reduction at the Lyceum, the Jubilee expenses were down more than \$4,000, and rather than lose money during our annual meeting, we made a small profit. (Because of space limitations, the usual summaries of the Society's finances will appear in the next bulletin.) Brad Dean moved that the minutes of the annual meeting as printed in last year's summer bulletin be accepted, which was seconded and

carried unanimously.

During the past year, Myerson noted, long-time members Sam Wellman, John Nickols, Mary Davey, Kay Allison, and Elliott Allison passed away. Jerry Buff spoke from the pulpit about his friends Mr. and Mrs. Allison, after which the members observed a moment of silence for our departed members.

New business was called, and Beth Witherell pointed out that Walter Harding had mentioned to her the previous day that a new edition of his *Variorum Walden* will be published by Houghton Mifflin on 4 July 1995—the sesquicentennial of Thoreau's move to the pond—the new edition to be titled *Walden: An Annotated Edition* and to include some 1,300 annotations, about twice the number as appeared in the earlier edition. Bob Sattelmeyer moved that the president write to Kenneth Walter Cameron on behalf of the Society to thank him for his very generous donations to the Society. This resolution, which was worded "Resolved: That the Society expresses its deep gratitude for a generous donation of books to Kenneth Walter Cameron," carried unanimously. Dan Shealy then moved that the president also write to John McAleer on behalf of the Society to thank him for his very generous donation to the Society, and this resolution, worded "Resolved: That the Society expresses its deep gratitude for a generous donation of books to John McAleer," also carried unanimously. Eric Parkman Smith noted that the following morning at 9:30 the First Parish would have a special service about Thoreau, "Walden: A Thoreau Celebration," and he encouraged members to attend. Peggy Brace then spoke about the Estabrook Woods controversy and urged the members to read some of the literature available at the back of the hall. Finally, Ken Harber spoke about an off-Broadway play by Joseph J. Deiss and titled *The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller* (see "Notes & Queries" below for more information). Myerson then announced that our keynote address speaker next year will be the Pulitzer Prize winning author and world-renowned naturalist Edward O. Wilson. Myerson also announced that the Board of Directors and the Program Committee would be working together during the coming months to plan a special annual meeting for next year in order to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Thoreau's move to Walden Pond. (The dates for the 1995 annual meeting will be 4-9 July, with the business meeting taking place on Saturday, 8 July 1995. Officers of the Society have already begun working with other organizations to plan special events for the meeting; as plans for those events are finalized, they will be announced in the bulletin.)

Robert Gross then delivered the keynote address, "Young Men and Women of the Fairest Promise: Transcendentalism in Concord," which was enjoyed by all present, judging from the applause and the compliments from auditors afterward. The address will be published as the lead article in the forthcoming *Concord Saunterer*. Myerson then delivered his presidential address, published in its entirety above, which met with sustained and enthusiastic applause from the assembled members.

Luncheon and Quiz

When the applause died down, the members filed downstairs to the First Parish vestry for lunch, catered by Molly Davidson and her crew. Ninety-odd diners enjoyed the fare, and as the luncheon wound down, index cards were distributed for those who wanted to write questions for the annual Thoreau Quiz.

Tom Blanding led the Quiz again this year and fielded thirty-two questions, only two of which went unanswered. The two unanswered questions were: (1) Did Thoreau ever mention the Greek mythological character Endymion in his

writings, and if so, in what context? and (2) How did Henry store any personal things [while at the pond]—hang his clothes, put his dishes, sheets, and so on? The cellar was probably a root cellar. What was in the loft? Larry Buell thought he recalled a reference to Endymion in Thoreau's early journal but was not sure and could not recall the context. (Please let your secretary know the answers to these questions if you think you know them so that he can publish them in the "Notes & Queries" section of the next bulletin.)

Here is a selection of some of the questions that were answered: How far is Walden Pond from the railroad station? (About a mile and a quarter.) What was the name of the Thoreau family cat? (Min was the one Thoreau wrote most about, but the family owned several cats over the years.) What was the name of Channing's dog? (Peter.) Did Thoreau ever own a dog? (Not that we know of, though he did say that he long ago lost a hound.) If Henry were alive today, would he be a member of the Thoreau Society? (Likely he would not, though he would probably approve of the Society's purpose as stated in our Articles of Organization.) What was Thoreau's favorite food? (Huckleberries or frozen-thawed apples.) Sophia Thoreau attended the Concord Academy, but did she graduate? (No.) What did Thoreau call the wind as he drifted in his boat over the pond? (The Zephyr.) In which of his writings does Thoreau mention the town of Boxborough? (*The Dispersion of Seeds*, "Huckleberries," and the unpublished *Wild Fruits* manuscript, and "Slavery in Massachusetts.") Did Thoreau smoke cigarettes? (No, but he says he once tried smoking dried lily stems.) Did Thoreau ever mention anyone drowning in Walden Pond? (Not that anyone can recall.) In his journal entry of 12 October 1855 Thoreau wrote about the extreme heaviness of some water-soaked log rails that he dredged out of the river and then wrote "Some farmers load their wood with gunpowder to punish thieves." What does this mean? (If anyone stole a log that a farmer had loaded with gunpowder, the log would explode when placed in a fireplace or stove, thus punishing the thief.) Was Abel Moore still the jailer when Thoreau spent his famous night in the slammer? (No, Sam Staples was the jailer.) Where is the largest collection of Thoreau manuscripts? (The largest number of bound leaves are at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City; the largest collection of loose leaves are at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.) What year was Henry's body moved to Author's Ridge at Sleepy Hollow? (Between 1866 and 1868, but probably in 1866, when his Aunt Louisa died.) Did Thoreau ever lecture in Philadelphia and, if so, when and on what subject? (On 21 November 1854 he delivered one of his early "Walking" lectures before the Spring Garden Institute in Philadelphia.) Are there any unpublished writings by Thoreau? (Yes and no; *Moonlight* has never been published in full, nor has *Wild Fruits*, nor has his so-called "Kalendar" of seasonal events.)

Session on the Future of the Society

At 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Joel Myerson, Brad Dean, and Kathi Anderson answered questions resulting from Myerson's earlier presidential address. One member wanted to know how the Society planned to fund the new Thoreau Educational Center. Myerson pointed out that there were two answers to that question. First, the principal responsibility of the new executive director would be to raise funds through various means, such as NEH collection grants. Second and more importantly, we will be working closely with the Walden Woods Project (WWP) to raise a multi-million dollar endowment. The Society's officers made it very clear to WWP early on that it could not become involved in the Center unless the Society and WWP

worked together to raise an endowment.

Another member asked if WWP would retain ownership of the Center building. Myerson responded that he thinks WWP would sell the building to us today for \$1, but that would be ridiculous now because we could not afford to operate or maintain the building. Therefore, WWP would retain ownership of the building until such time that we were in a financial position to assume ownership. However, the final ownership of the building is a point that has not yet been negotiated with WWP. Dean mentioned that WWP had expressed a willingness to lease the building to the Society for ninety-nine years at \$1 a year—and that he was prepared to donate the \$99 to the Society for that purpose should WWP and the Society decide that such an arrangement would be mutually acceptable. But Dean noted that negotiations with WWP are still in the preliminary stages and that the success of much of the proposed changes would hinge on the new executive director, who should be on board sometime this fall.

A question was raised about any transition in the Lyceum situation and whether the Board of Directors had established a date for an alternate location for the Lyceum. Myerson responded that no dates had been established yet and that, again, a great deal would depend on the new executive director. A member wanted to know if there was any "between-the-lines" information we might have on the possible purchase of the Yellow or Thoreau-Alcott house. Myerson said we have no indication from the current owner of the house that he and his family plan to move, but we (the Society and WWP) want to maintain a position of readiness in the event the house does go on the market again. In response to a question about zoning and alterations to the structure in the event we were to acquire the Thoreau-Alcott house, Myerson pointed out that the Society would be very reluctant to alter the structure in any significant way and would work with the neighbors and town officials to meet zoning requirements, including parking difficulties, which we assume we would be able to overcome by using the public parking facilities behind the old Welch's building, just down Main Street a few blocks from the house.

Regarding the operations of the Lyceum and Myerson's remark about continuing those operations uninterrupted during any interim period, Myerson said that the Society's officers would like very much to work with the Concord Museum to continue the educational functions of the Lyceum, particularly the second-grade program. Currently, though, the Museum is undergoing a transition of its own and expects to have a new executive director very soon. Once the Museum's new executive director is on board, we plan to open negotiations with the Museum and see if we can begin resolving some of these issues, which we believe we will be able to do.

Were these new changes a result of dissatisfaction with the current educational activities at the Lyceum, one member asked, and what is the motivation for creating the Thoreau Educational Center? Dean answered that, as Myerson had pointed out in his presidential address earlier, the new Center will offer us unparalleled opportunities to expand our current educational activities well beyond their current spheres and to better fulfill the purpose of the Society as stated in our Articles of Organization. The Society's officers, many Society members, and many members of the public have expressed their admiration for and appreciation of the current programs being carried out so ably by Anne McGrath and her staff at the Lyceum. But the Society's officers also realize that the physical property on Belknap Street presents us with certain liabilities and seriously restricts the range of opportunities offered us, which is the principal

reason for our desire to establish the new Center and look for a suitable interim location for the valuable activities of the Lyceum.

One member expressed some concern about the current archives of the Society, now on permanent loan in the Concord Free Public Library, being moved out of the Library and into the new Center. Dean said that this concern results from a misunderstanding. The current archives will remain at the Library, but large new donations to the Society's archives would go to the Center once the Center is properly fitted to receive such donations. In response to questions about increased traffic upsetting the neighbors along the road leading to the Center, Dean and Myerson pointed out that there are already some dozen or more people living in the structure and that, very likely, traffic would be reduced once the Society moves into the Center because access to the Center would be by shuttle only.

Yet another member cautioned that having a "scholarly" Center and a "public-outreach" Lyceum might result in the Society developing a split identity, on the one hand a monastic, isolated personality and on the other a more public, mass-audience one. Dean and Myerson agreed that this must be one of many possibilities that the Society's officers and, indeed, the Society's members must guard against. Then Dean and Myerson confronted the oft-touted claim that these new changes signify a betrayal of Thoreau's ideal of simplicity by pointing out that fundamentally these changes are quite simple and will result in a far more effective means of accomplishing the Society's goals. Thoreau, they pointed out, was always on the lookout for better means to achieve his ends and had even invented more technologically sophisticated ways of, for instance, grinding graphite. The issue is not whether the changes being pursued are simple or complex, but whether they are more efficient means to a valuable end. Ought Thoreau to have dispensed with his surveying tools or his telescope simply because using his eyes alone would be more simple? Thoreau himself answered that question—by using his surveying tools and his eyeglass.

If nothing else, this session and the discussions resulting from the new directions that the Society is pursuing have given the officers and members of the Society an unprecedented opportunity to reassess what the Society is, what it offers or ought to offer members and the larger public, and how it ought to position itself to move into the twenty-first century.

Other Activities

To celebrate the pending acquisition of the Thoreau Educational Center and to have an opportunity to meet the residents of Baker Farm Road in Lincoln, the Walden Woods Project and the Board of Directors of the Society sponsored a reception at the Center on Thursday evening. Approximately seventy-five people attended, and a good time was had by all.

On Friday evening well-known author Helen Nearing spoke to a large crowd at the Meeting House of the First Parish in Concord. Her topic was "Thoreau, Then and Now." This event was sponsored by the Society and the Concord Program.

Sunday morning Richard O'Connor led a walk to Walden Pond, filling in for Walter Harding, who was unable to lead the walk because of illness. Twenty-two members joined O'Connor and enjoyed listening to his accounts of Walden's history. Sunday afternoon Thomas Blanding led a group of members on a walking tour to sites in and near Concord Center and pointed out the significance of those sites to Thoreau and their overall place in Concord's history.

On Sunday morning the First Parish in Concord enjoyed a service titled "Walden: A Thoreau Celebration." A portion of the service consisted of the text of *Walden* set to music, with tenor Paul Wiggin, pianist Susan Minor, and ballerina Edra Toth. The Reverend Elizabeth Aleaide directed and coordinated the service and joined Thomas Blanding, Dan Harper, and Margaret Stewart in reading from Thoreau's writings to the accompaniment of Stephen James on organ.

During the annual meeting, many members commented on how interesting and enjoyable the annual meetings have become in recent years. We encourage members to help make next year's annual meeting a success by planning to attend the special events that will be planned for 4-9 July 1995. Again, as events are planned, they will be announced in the bulletin.

Beyond Thoreau's Pencil

Barbara L. Barros

Consider the magic of the pencil. It enables us to place our thoughts on paper in front of us and ruminante upon them. With the invention of the pencil, not just communication but also analysis became more widely accessible. Anyone who could afford pencil and paper and a bit of education could more effectively contemplate the world through writing, drawing, and figuring. The product of such a process can be shared or just used to reach a better understanding of something complex and intriguing.

Now think of the computer as a tool inspired by those very same desires. In particular, imagine a computer screen showing a map of Thoreau's Walden Woods. On top of this map you create and examine transparent layers of literary, historical, and ecological evidence related to the Woods.

While this exercise can be accomplished with paper and pencil, the computer makes rendering the overlays, and correcting and updating them, much easier. But computers can do at least two things that paper maps can't do:

1. A choice of layers from a computer map library can be combined instantly to show the relationship between two or more sets of information. For instance, all of Thoreau's walks through Hubbard's Close can be combined on top of a present day map or the 1852 Walling map. This might aid a scholar's hunch about the pattern of wetlands plants observed; or it might enhance a preservationist's case that Thoreau was inspired by an area larger than the immediate vicinity of the pond.
2. Computer maps can be annotated with text, charts, drawings, photographs, and even film clips and sound that "pop up" when a site name or symbol is pressed. From each site on Thoreau's walk can pop up his journal entries about the site, a drawing or photograph of the plant he describes, or more detailed maps or plans for the site.

Since 1991, I have been at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning exploring how this technology can be made useful to the city- and townscape studies of scholars and planners. As part of my research, I received a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to apply

easy-to-use computer mapping to the planning and preservation issues surrounding Walden Woods. With the assistance of Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance members, I developed a sampling of maps to demonstrate the kinds of tools that could inform planning for an historical landscape such as Walden Woods. Thoreau scholar Thomas Blanding, who had never used a computer before, plotted out a number of Thoreau's walks through the northern part of Walden Woods. This work, along with other demonstration projects, is documented in my upcoming *CityView/TownView HyperMapping—Making Maps and Map Libraries on Your Computer—A Journal of Demonstration Projects 1991-93*. This publication will come out in September of 1994 along with the HyperMapping software for scholars and planners to make their own map libraries of their study areas. If you are interested in this new technology and would like further information, you can call me at (617) 482-7458.

Thoreau Educational Center, Baker Farm Road, Lincoln

[Editor's Note: The following text was taken from the realtor's brochure describing the new Thoreau Educational Center, heretofore known as the Middlesex Meadows estate. More information about the Center will appear in future issues of the bulletin.]

Location: Known for its extensive conservation land and trails, Lincoln is a lovely, traditional New England town with open fields, woods, and winding country roads; and it is only 25 minutes from the heart of Boston by car or by train. Close to major highways and Logan International Airport, Lincoln is also within easy reach of Cape Cod, the Maine Coast, and the ski areas of Vermont and New Hampshire. The town is served by an excellent school system and offers many cultural advantages, including the DeCordova Art Museum, Historic Codman House, and Dunlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary.

Property: Once the gathering place for the Middlesex Hunt and so christened "Middlesex Meadows," the three-story mansion looks down over a cascading lawn. Formal gardens with specimen trees enhance the property; a half-mile driveway and 72 acres of adjacent conservation land ensure seclusion and privacy at this ultimate Lincoln location. The house is offered with 11.35 acres, including a 6.65 acre buildable lot, which could be developed with minimal impact on the property.

Residence: Magnificent Tudor manor built by the son of the founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Henry Lee Higginson. This unique turn-of-the-century estate was modeled after an old manor in Norfolk, England, by famed architect Julian Ingersoll Chamberlain. The twenty-one room manor house features original woodwork, period fixtures, leaded glass windows, a maid caller, and, hidden behind a revolving bookcase in the library, a passageway which was built during Prohibition and which led to a drinking room in the basement.

First Floor: A grand, forty-foot, two-story wood-paneled entry hall with a castle-sized fireplace sets the tone of the house. The other ground floor rooms include a paneled 38x20 foot living room with two fireplaces, a paneled 20x18 foot library/sunroom, and a formal dining room dressed with wainscoting, hardwood flooring, a fireplace, and a bay window that looks out to the lawns and perennial flower beds. An original butler's pantry leads

from the dining room to the kitchen and the servant's dining room, each with a fireplace. A forty-foot long three-season porch overlooks the vista to the south.

Second and Third Floors: A sunny master bedroom suite features garden views and a private bath with a fireplace. An adjoining room serves as a sitting room or second bedroom. Four additional bedrooms are spacious and airy, and a dramatic gallery on the second floor overlooks the entry hall. The third floor contains three additional bedrooms and a two-bedroom au pair or in-law apartment which features a fieldstone fireplace, a cathedral ceiling in the living room and affords tranquil views of the countryside.

Additional Buildings: The property includes a two-car garage, a heated greenhouse currently being used as an art studio, and a two room heated shed.

Thoreau Receives a Fan Letter for A Week

Joel Myerson

Thoreau may have ended up with more copies of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* in his personal library than the total number of copies sold to others, but some people did respond enthusiastically to the book. One was George A. Bailey of Portland, Maine, whose letter to Thoreau of inquiry and praise is here printed for the first time.¹

Portland, Me., Oct. 7th., 1850.

Dear Sir:

A few days since, by a lucky accident I met with a copy of a work of yours—"A week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers."—I read it with much interest,—and if I tell you plainly that I am delighted with the book, it is because I cannot help telling you so;—therefore you should pardon whatever is amiss in the expression.—I should like to ask you many questions touching your allusions to persons; such, for instance, as "What were the names of the "aged shepherd" and "youthful pastor", p. 21?—What that of the "Concord poet" quoted on p. 49?—of the Justice of the Peace and Deacon, p. 68? what the name of "one who was born on its head waters," quoted on p. 90?—and many more of a similar nature; but I fear that such an act on the part of a stranger, would be but little short of impertinence [sic], though it might be kindly considered by you; so I must not use *that* method of making myself "wise above what is written."²

Next to confessing to you my admiration of your book, my object in writing you, is to make an enquiry for "Walden; or Life in the Woods,"—announced at the close of the "Week", as shortly to be published.³ I have enquired for it in Boston, but no one can tell me anything about it. Will you please inform me if it has been published, and, if so, where it may be found?⁴—Truly & Respectfully Yours,

Geo. A. Bailey

H. D. Thoreau, Esq., Concord, Mass.

Notes

1. Bailey's letter is in my collection.
2. The "aged shepherd" and "youthful pastor" (Princeton Edition of *A Week*, pp. 18-19) are, respectively, Ezra Ripley and Nathaniel Hawthorne; the "Concord poet" and his poem (p. 45) are Ellery Channing's "The River," which first appeared in the *Dial*, 3 (January 1843): 329; the

"Justice of the Peace and Deacon" (p. 63) is unidentified; "one who was born on its headwaters" (p. 85) is identified in Channing's marked copy of *A Week as Nathaniel P. Rogers*, editor of the anti-slavery *Herald of Freedom* (see Walter Harding's edition of *A Week* [New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963], p. 334).

3. *Walden* was advertised on a leaf at the end of *A Week* as "will soon be published" (1849 edition, p. [415]).

4. Walter Harding, "The First Year's Sales of Thoreau's *Walden*," *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, 117 (Fall 1971): 1-3, does not list George A. Bailey as having purchased a copy directly from the publisher. He does, however, list I. S. Bailey (a relative?), a Portland, Maine, bookseller, as having purchased copies; George Bailey may have bought one of those copies.

Curator's Corner

Anne McGrath

So many visitors to Concord want to visit *Walden* that the parking areas of the reservation are forced to have "rest periods" from time to time. Tickets are sold for certain hours, and the "holders" are responsible for turning up when it is their turn.

What a contrast this is to the trips that my family made in a "democrat" pulled by our old mare Peggy. The wood road from our farm to the pond went through parts of both Concord and Lincoln. If you got to the pond in time you could stand in the water facing the east and see the sun rising behind the pines on the hill.

Notes & Queries

Leigh Kirkland sends us the following query: Published in the July 1853 *Una*, a feminist newspaper published from 1853-55 and edited by Paulina Wright Davis, is a Channing poem, "Swan Point," which is not in the *Collected Poems*. It was sent to the paper by Sarah Helen Whitman, the spiritualist-poet-Poe fiancée, who wrote "I send you for your paper, a poem by our friend, W.E. Channing. It was written after a visit to the beautiful Cemetery on the banks of the Seekonk, not far from the point of Roger Williams' first landing." McGill records Channing traveling through Providence during the summer of 1853, but I haven't found anything about his knowing Whitman. Does anyone know anything about this relationship—if it was a relationship—or this poem? Address responses to Leigh Kirkland, Thoreau Journal, Department of English, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3083; tel: (404) 651-2900; fax: (404) 651-1710; Internet: englk@gsusgi2.gsu.edu.

Have a favorite (relatively brief) Thoreau quotation? Send it to us for use as a final-page drop quotation in a future bulletin (first come, first used).

Ralph Chism (Internet: rchism@teleport.com) informs us that Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience" is available on Internet via FTP (File Transfer Protocol), Gopher (a rodentia), or other means such as a WWW (World-Wide Web) server site. Once into the network, access world.std.com and follow this path: OBI Online Book Initiative, The Online Books, Henry David Thoreau.

Jim Dawson reports finding a new early reference to Thoreau: Nathaniel H. Bishop, in *Voyage of the Paper*

Canoe (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1878, p. 317), has a two-paragraph reference, favorable, to *Walden*.

James Cummins, in his Catalog 42 (699 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10024), lists for sale Edward Hoar's personal copy of *Maine Woods*, Rockwood Hoar's copy of *Excursions*, and F.B. Sanborn's copy of *A Week*.

Daniel W. Bjork, in *B.F. Skinner: A Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), speaks frequently of Skinner's interest in Thoreau and of his unhappiness when critics said of his *Walden Two* that it had a presumptuous title. "It was as much like Thoreau's original title as a Quonset hut is like a comfortable and properly proportioned Cape Cod house" (p.155). Bjork also tells us that Skinner was very pleased to be invited to speak at the Thoreau Society annual meeting because it "vindicated his conviction that he had always been a Thoreauian" (p. 220)!

Edward J. Renehan, Jr., in *John Burroughs: An American Naturalist* (Post Mills, Vt.: Chelsea Green, 1992), frequently mentions Burroughs' constant interest in Thoreau and says that when Burroughs met Emerson, he spent most of his time asking Emerson about Thoreau. He tells us also that when Henry Ford and Burroughs visited Concord in 1913, the Ford Motor Company took moving pictures of their visit to *Walden* and Sleepy Hollow. We have suggested that an effort be made to locate this film and, perhaps, to show it at next year's annual meeting.

The latest (1993) volume of *American Book Prices Current* lists the following auction prices: *Cape Cod*, 1st edition, \$90; Watson illustrated *Cape Cod*, \$190; *Excursions*, 1st edition, \$175, \$130; *Walden*, 1st, \$1000; *Walden*, Ruizicka edition, \$100; 1906 Manuscript Edition, lacking 1 vol., \$1900; Manuscript Edition, \$7000; ALS to John on the manufacture of gun flints, \$6500.

Betty Fussell's *The Story of Corn* (Knopf, 1992) has as its epigraph, "I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which corn grows"—from Thoreau's "Walking."

Joseph J. Deiss's play *Risorgimento: The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller*, based on his biography of Fuller, will begin its four-week run at Theater for the New City (off-Broadway) on 10 November 1994. The play is officially sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute of New York. Dina Harris is the dramatist, Robert Kalfin the director, and George Bartinieff and Crystal Field the producers. Incidentally, Deiss lives in the house of Thoreau's Well-Fleet Oysterman on Cape Cod.

Please note that the Board of Directors voted to assess members living outside the United States a \$5 annual handling fee in addition to the standard membership fee. The handling fee, which does not apply to life members, is required to offset the additional postage for mailing the four bulletins and *The Concord Saunterer*.

The Thoreau Society is sponsoring a ListServ (electronic bulletin board) about Thoreau on the Internet. For information or to subscribe, send an Internet message to your secretary (Internet: endeam@ecuvm.cis.ecu.edu). The ListServ is currently called "Thor-Soc"; if anyone would like to suggest another name (eight characters or less), please let your secretary know.

If your mailing address changes, please let the Society know your new address. We are charged \$0.35 for each item forwarded through the mails.

Thoreau's new book *Faith in a Seed* won the Publishers Marketing Association's Benjamin Franklin Awards for the Best Natural History Book of 1993.

The *Walden Woods Project* held a benefit dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston on 13 June 1994. Part of the event included a screening of Jack Nicholson's new movie, *Wolf*. Among the notables who attended were Nicholson himself, recording artist Don Henley (who hosted the

event), actor Ted Danson, Senator John Kerry, former senator Paul Tsongas, Michael Kennedy, Boston Red Sox pitcher Frank Viola, Houghton Mifflin president and CEO Nader Darchshori, Boston Garden president Larry Moulter, and Sylvania Corporation CEO Dean Langford. After dinner Henley introduced Nicholson by saying, "Two people deserve special recognition tonight: Jack Nicholson and Henry David Thoreau." The audience applauded, and when Nicholson ascended the platform the first thing he said was "I like the billing!"

The June 1994 issue of the magazine *Travel Holiday* featured the following cryptogram: "Wy fzto k akr, wy Fdudpdeqdx ix Itpiqdx. Bkjady wf k udxhdtp hixdfp ewxxix, fdp xizya bwpo fpiydf kf uxdtwifz pi er drd kf wh hdbdx ix xkdx." —Poixdkz. The solution will appear in the next bulletin.

The State of Massachusetts implemented Governor Weld's recommendation to reduce the parking fee at the Walden Pond State Reservation from \$5 to \$2 a day and from \$30 to \$15 per season—wreaking havoc on the already bad parking problem there.

On 20 July 1994 the Walden Woods Project purchased for \$1.53 million an 18.26-acre site in the Town of Lincoln, Massachusetts, and in the Walden Woods. The new Thoreau Educational Center (see separate article above) is located on the site, which is less than a half mile from Walden Pond.

Museum Collections (306 Dartmouth Street, Boston, MA 02116) manufactures a hand-cast solid brass garden marker hand finished in verdigris and featuring Thoreau's quotation "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads." The price is \$35.

David Barto performed his one-man show of Thoreau again this past summer at Walden Pond State Reservation from 2-31 July. His appearance was sponsored by the Walden Conservancy and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. Barto performed two programs a day except Mondays and Tuesdays: a 6 a.m. sunrise walk and a 6 p.m. evening talk. At 8 p.m. on 31 July in the Meeting House of the First Parish in Concord Barto again assumed the identity of Thoreau and

"expounded" on "Civil Disobedience." Thomas Blanding spoke before Barto and introduced him to the audience. Barto was featured in an article titled "One Man's Virtual Reality: Henry David Thoreau" in the Boston Globe NorthWest Weekly section on 24 July 1994, and on 3 August Barto-as-Thoreau met a group of children at the Thoreau house replica at the Walden Pond State Reservation.

During the 4th of July weekend, a 23-year-old New Jersey man drowned in the Thoreau Cove of Walden Pond.

About one hundred Thoreauvians ascended Mt. Greylock on the weekend of 23-24 July 1994 as part of a sesquicentennial commemoration of Thoreau's ascent on 23 July 1844. Elliot Fenander organized and co-sponsored the event, and past-president of the Society William

Howarth spoke on Thoreau during the event.

Well-known Thoreau scholar, past-president of the Society, and Concord resident Thomas Blanding began yet another one of his excellent eight-week Thoreau seminars on 13 September 1994.

Blanding's seminar is held on Tuesday evenings for two hours at

the Thoreau Lyceum in Concord and costs just \$125. This particular seminar is on Thoreau's natural history essays.

Ann E. Chapman and several others are trying to organize a conference for next summer to be called "Conservation and Social Justice: Reforging the Ancient Links, Contemporary Relevance of Thoreau's Legacy of Philosophy and Activism." Those interested in more information can contact Chapman at (508) 456-2324 or (508) 480-9777.

Conover & Co. Communications, Inc. (1117 Independence Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003), is selling the Herbert Gleason photograph collection for an undisclosed price.

Because of space limitations, articles on the Society's financial condition and the geographical distribution of the Society's members, as well as a list of the new officers' addresses, will be published in the next bulletin.



The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an international nonprofit organization of students and admirers of Henry D. Thoreau. The administrative, membership, and publications center of the Society is at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. In Concord, Massachusetts, the Society maintains the Thoreau Lyceum, headquartered in a nineteenth-century shingled house next to the lot on which the Thoreau family's "Texas House" stood. A replica of the Walden House has been built on the Lyceum grounds. The Society is establishing the Thoreau Educational Center near Walden Pond in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Membership in the Society is open to the public and includes subscriptions to its two publications, *The Concord Saunterer* and *The Thoreau Society Bulletin*, and free admission to the Thoreau Lyceum for members and guests. The Thoreau Society, Inc., holds an annual convention in Concord and sponsors various academic and nonacademic activities throughout the year. Individual or institutional dues \$20; students \$10; family \$35; benefactor \$100; life \$500. Non-life members outside the U.S. should add \$5.00 handling fee.

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